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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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TROOPS TO TEACHERS PROGRAM GETS UNDERWAY

Secretary of Defense William Perry announced the implementation of the Teacher and Teacher's Aide Placement Assistance Program. This program, more commonly called "Troops to Teachers," will help finance teacher certification training for separated servicemembers, terminated DoD and DoE civilians, and certain displaced defense contractor employees. They, in turn, will be placed as teachers and teacher's aides in schools that serve children from low-income families and are experiencing teacher shortages.

"It's a win-win situation," said Secretary Perry. "We can help provide teachers in areas where educators are in short supply and at the same time help servicemembers, DoD and DoE civilians transition out of the federal work force during this difficult period of downsizing."

Some teachers and teacher's aides will be in classrooms before the end of this school year. DoD has already received more than 3000 inquiries and 800 completed applications. More than 60 applicants have already been selected, pending their separation from the military.

To be eligible for the program, military personnel must have served for at least six continuous years on active duty prior to release from service, have a service record that will lead to an honorable discharge, and apply no later than one year after release from active duty. Civilian employees of DoD and DoE must be facing termination as a result of the drawdown or base closure and may apply no later than 60 days after termination of employment. Both military and civilian personnel must have a baccalaureate degree to qualify for the teacher portion of the program. Military personnel who do not meet this education requirement for program eligibility at the time of discharge have five years to earn their baccalaureate degree. Those interested in entering public education as a teacher's aide must have an associate degree at the time of application. DoD agrees to provide a stipend of up to \$5000 to offset costs of alternative certification training. In return, participants must agree to accept employment for five years in a school serving low-income families.

Interested individuals may apply at base education centers and at offices handling transition assistance. Requests for information may be mailed to: Defense Activity for Non-traditional Education Support (DANTES), 6490 Saufley Field Road, Pensacola, Florida, 32509-5243. Information is also available by calling the DANTES toll free number: 1-800-452-6616.

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